

District of Columbia State Data Center Monthly Brief

December 2007

Holiday Related Indicators

The holiday season from Thanksgiving to the New Year is a time for gathering and celebrating with friends and family, gift-giving, reflections and thanks. As we ring in the New Year of 2008, the United States is projected to have a population of 303 million. This compares with a population of 175 million 50 years ago in 1958, and a population of 90 million 100 years ago in 1908. To commemorate this time of year, some holiday-related facts and figures are brought to you from the U.S. Census Bureau data collection.

It's in the Mail

The U.S. Postal Service delivered 20 billion letters, packages and cards between Thanksgiving and Christmas in 2006. The busiest mailing day last year was December 18, with more than twice as many cards and letters being processed as the average on any given day. The busiest delivery day was December 20.

Rush to the Stores

The nation's department stores had retail sales of \$31.4 billion in December 2006. This represented a 44 percent jump from the previous month (when retail sales, many holiday-related, registered \$21.8 billion). No other month-to-month increase in

department store sales last year was as large.

Other U.S. retailers with sizable jumps in sales between November and December 2006 were book stores (86 percent); clothing stores (49 percent); jewelry stores (155 percent); radio, TV and other electronics stores (60 percent); and sporting goods stores (65 percent).

The proportion of total 2006 sales for department stores (including leased departments) in December was 14 percent. For jewelry stores, the percentage was 22 percent.

Department stores employed 1.7 million people in December 2006. Retail employment typically swells during the holiday season, last year rising by an estimated 40,600 from November and 174,700 from October.

The value of retail sales by electronic shopping and mail-order houses in December 2006 was \$21 billion - the highest total for any month last year.

The value of total retail e-commerce sales for the fourth quarter of 2006 was \$35.3 billion. This amount represented 3.4 percent of total retail sales during the period and exceeded

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by
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ed e-commerce sales for all other quarters of the year. E-commerce sales were up 24 percent from the fourth quarter of 2005.

The number of electronic shopping and mail-order houses in business in 2005 was 15,924. These businesses, which employed 253,677 workers, are a popular source of holiday gifts. Their sales: \$162 billion, of which 40.5 percent were attributable to e-commerce. California led the nation in the number of these establishments and their employees, with 2,383 and 30,800, respectively. There were 48,695 malls and shopping centers dotting the U.S. landscape as of 2005, a total that increased by approximately 12,000 since 1990.

Christmas Trees and Decorations

Christmas tree farmers earned \$512 million in 2006, with North Carolina (\$134 million) as the top producer. Oregon was next at \$121 million in sales.

The value of U.S. imports of Christmas tree ornaments from

China between January and June 2007 was \$142.6 million. China was the leading country of origin for such items. Similarly, China was the leading foreign source of artificial Christmas trees shipped to the United States (\$13.4 million worth) during the same period.

Where the Toys are ... Made

There were 104 establishments in the U.S. that primarily manufactured dolls and stuffed toys in 2005; they employed 2,480 people. California led the nation with 18 locations.

There were 707 establishments in the U.S. that primarily produced games, toys and children's vehicles in 2005; they employed 15,381 workers. California led the nation with 115 establishments.

The value of U.S. toy imports including stuffed toys (excluding dolls), puzzles and electric trains from China between January and June 2007 was \$3.3 billion. China was the leading country of origin for stuffed toys coming into this country, as well as for a number of other popular holiday gifts. These include roller skates (\$79 million), sports footwear (\$193 million), golf equipment (\$36 million) and basketballs (\$23 million). China leads Canada as the leading supplier of ice skates (\$6.6 million versus \$3.8 million), with Thailand ranking third (\$2.8 million).

Holiday Names

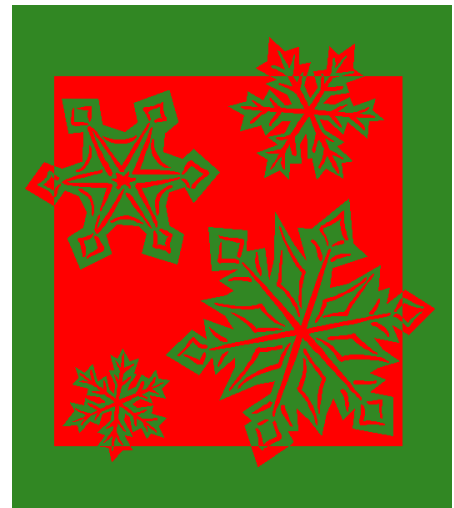
Places whose names are associated with the holiday season include North Pole, Alaska (population 1,828 in 2006); Santa Claus, Ind. (2,324); Santa Claus, Ga. (245); Noel, Mo. (1,555); and — if you know about

reindeer — the village of Rudolph, Wis. (419) and Dasher, Ga. (803). There is Snowflake, Ariz. (5,157) and a dozen places named Holly, including Holly Springs, Miss., and Mount Holly, N.C.

New Year's Eve and Day

The estimated July 1, 2006, population of Champaign, Illinois was 73,685, a place whose name alone may get you into a celebratory mood.

U.S. manufacturers shipments of effervescent wines (including sparkling wines, such as champagne) in 2002 was \$475 million.



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